

**THE “INITIATIVE” PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY**  
**Filtered Summary**  
**Reflecting Public Input Received Through September 14, 2007**

**Reorganization – Natural Resources**

- Multiple entries suggesting several difference combinations of mergers of the natural resources agencies the Departments of Conservation, IF&W, Environmental Protection, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources Forestry and the State Planning Office.

**Reorganization – Other**

- Merge the Departments of Community & Economic Development with the Department of Professional & Financial Regulation.
- Merge DPFR under DAFS but place all consumer protection functions in the AG's office.
- Provide better economic support to farmers by creating a Farm Bureau within the Department of Economic and Community Development and move the Department of Agriculture's development programs into this Bureau. This would raise the profile of the agricultural sector as an integral part of the State's development future and better connect farmers with all potential resources and markets. Further consolidation and integration could occur by moving the Animal Control program into Public Safety and the regulatory programs into Professional and Financial Regulation, DHHS or DEP depending on the nature and purpose of the programs. This consolidation would result in the elimination of at least one Commissioner and one Deputy Commissioner, and would improve the economic and development support to farmers.
- Merge the Maine Turnpike Authority into the Department of Transportation.
- Eliminate the State Planning Office. Move its economic related activities under the Budget Office rename as Office of Budgeting and Planning. All other programs within SPO should be moved to the Department of Conservation or the DEP as appropriate.
- Merge all of the cultural agencies under Secretary of State.
- Create a "Maine Cultural Commission" and combine the Maine Arts Commission, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine Historical Society, Maine Humanities Council, Maine State Museum and the Maine Public Broadcasting Corporation.
- Move the Disability Rights Center and Pine Tree Legal Assistance to the Maine Human Rights Commission.
- Elimination of the Maine Geological Survey. That bureau duplicates the work of the Federal agency, the U.S. Geological Survey, and perforce fills no useful niche in State government.
- Combine the food inspection services of DHHS and the Department of Agriculture under one Agency.
- Merge the financial, personnel and other administrative support functions for the Constitutional Officers into a new Constitutional Officers services center. Options as whether it is freestanding, included with other DAFS service centers or included in Legislative offices?
- Undo the congregation of financial management and HR staff within the DAFS. The lack of program expertise in these groups has only forced remaining program staff to

assume the liaison roles between program and service groups that the now DAFS staff once had.

- Combine the states law enforcement. For example the state police can absorb the marine patrol, fire marshals, game wardens, forest rangers and others into one agency. This should only be done for the state level agencies. New Jersey did it for some of their agencies and other states too.

## **Position Eliminations**

- Eliminate State Nuclear Safety Advisor - Salary more than \$75,000 per year, total cost with benefits more than \$100,000. Maine has no nuclear facilities whatsoever, except for the low-level waste site in Wiscasset.
- Eliminate Associate Commissioner, DAFS. Salary more than \$90,000, total cost with benefits is \$120,000.
- Eliminate Development Program Manager in DECD Office of Innovation. Salary more than \$60,000, total cost with benefits is \$85,000. This is clerical or low-level administrative work.
- Eliminate the Office of the Public Advocate and related staff. Enhance the requirements of the public utility commission to err on the side of the rate payer while insuring the regulated entities secure the necessary rate of Return on Equity/Return on Investment.
- Outsource the Single State Audit and downsize the State Audit staff (see LD in the first session of the 123<sup>rd</sup>).
- Eliminate the public affairs and legislative liaisons at the department level.
- Consolidate all HR Back office functions to a central location.
- Implement a hiring freeze.
- Eliminating all "public relations" positions in the executive departments and give the Governor's office an extra position or two to do the PR work for the departments.
- From an employee of the Maine Department of Corrections (DOC), review DOC central office staff, which swelled from a small handful of people to the present prodigious number. There is no need to have several associate commissioners and a large number of collateral bureaucrats with their secretarial staff.
- Several years ago the state hired 2 people, at \$50,000 each plus travel expenses, to verify that the Department of Purchases was not buying from "sweat-shops". It would have been much less expensive to have just told the buyers "don't buy from sweat-shops".
- Eliminate the Maine Fire Protection Services Commission.
- The Maine Department of Labor located at 45 Commerce Drive in Augusta has seen a reduction in the work force (mostly clerks) by approximately 50% over the last few years, yet the management levels remain virtually the same. A few months ago, the Benefits Section and the Tax Section were combined as a cost saving measure and because of the diminishing amount of clerical workers. The amazing thing is that each Section had a highly paid Director. When the two Sections were combined BOTH Directors were kept. They are now called CO-DIRECTORS.

## **State Employee Salaries and Benefits**

- If all state employees were asked to contribute at some % towards the cost of their health insurance. (Numerous suggestions with varying percentages.)
- Remove all state employees and legislators current health insurance and replace it with the Dirigo Health program.
- Allow all new state employees (educators too) to enroll in Social Security.

- The State's cost for state employee basic group life insurance was increased this year from 14 cents per \$1000 to 26 cents per \$1000. This was done after an internal actuarial review by the Retirement Board. This increase in premiums will cost the General Fund between \$3-\$10 million over the biennium, depending on what class of employee you include in the analysis. My recommendation is to require the Maine State Retirement board to solicit competitive bids from group life insurance providers for basic life insurance coverage. The large increase implemented by the board is inconsistent with the national downward trend in premiums in the group life insurance market, and deserves review. The federal government, for example, provides basic group life insurance to federal employees for 15 cents per \$1000.
- Offer early retirement to state employees who will be 55 years within a year of January 1, 2008, as though they were 62. (Adjust the age equivalent from 62 to a younger age to adjust how many employees would likely take the early retirement.) This change will immediately reduce the headcount, payroll and benefits payable by the State of Maine.
- Financing the unfunded liability with the Maine State Retirement System via a bond issue rather than the current indebtedness to MSRS would save about \$2 million a year.
- Few companies provide pensions in this day of 401Ks. The State should discontinue the pension program and set up 401Ks.
- Reduction of Holidays for all state employees from 12 to 10 days.

## **DHHS Issues**

- Everyone who receives an SSI check also qualifies for a Food Stamps EBT Card. There is a section on the EBT card for a cash benefit as well as a food stamp benefit. Everyone that receives an SSI check also receives a \$10.00 state supplemental check. This state paper check can be eliminated as mailing fees by putting the state supplemental check on the cash section of the EBT card. The state DHHS oversees both programs: the supplemental \$10 check and the EBT card.
- Reimburse hospitals for direct patient care costs only to save millions of \$'s. The State should reimburse hospitals only for the salaries and benefits of the providers/care givers that are assigned to the patient, and the value of any medicines or other medical/therapeutic materials used in the care of the patient. This should include also the percentage of time the nursing aids, housekeeping, etc. spend per day per patient. In other words, Mainecare should not be used to pay administrative costs. Alternatively, some small overhead could be charged (say no more than 10% of total costs). Furthermore, the state should audit any hospitals receiving state aid for medical services, and the % of every dollar going to direct patient care vs. administrative costs should be published each year. Incentives should be provided to those entities that reduce their administrative costs.
- Eliminate the 3 Regional Managers. If you asked any one of them I do not believe you would get consensus on what their job really is.
- Close the Levinson Center in the Bangor area and relocate the patients to Treats Falls, a private facility.
- Close the Dorothea Dix Center and relocate patients to private facilities or other public facilities.
- Privatize the management and service delivery of Riverview in Augusta. Benchmark ourselves against NH for the number of facilities and beds we have to gauge the right sizing of our in state mental health facilities.

- Automate food stamps! Give recipients a swipe card, only allow the purchase of fresh healthy food, and monitor the whole thing with a single person who runs reports against a database that lists what they bought and when.
- The DHHS has a number of programs serving the incapacitated elderly, mentally retarded, mentally ill, and minor children in receipt of SSI benefits in which the State of Maine serves in the capacity of Social Security appointed Representative Payee. As a government entity, Maine is entitled to collect a fee for each and every one of these thousands of individuals every month. This requires application to and approval by the regional social Security office. As of December 2005, the monthly fee was the lesser of \$33 or 10% of the individual's combined Social Security and SSI benefit. Dollar fees to be collected are adjusted in December to reflect the COLA. To my knowledge, the State of Maine has never collected this fee. It has the potential to generate a great deal of revenue in return for this very important service the DHHS provides to thousands of incapacitated persons statewide. The state earns this revenue and should be collecting it. I am unaware of the actual total number of persons this affects, but it would be worth somebody's time to make a few phone calls to determine how much money this could be.
- When DHHS comes to do Daycare annual licensing inspections, they send 2 workers not just one. The second one they send comes all the way down from the county (mileage and hotel). It actually takes longer for 2 people to do the inspection than it took when it was just one. Seems like an incredible waste of manpower. If they are that overstaffed to afford to double up, I'd say let's eliminate some positions to save money on payroll, mileage and hotel expenses.
- Consolidate Child Support Enforcement Management with Eligibility Management. They are all part of Integrated Access and Support, why not have one person to report to? I believe there are 3 or 4 of these positions.
- MaineCare recipients should pay a co-pay. The rest of us have to. This would cut down on ambulance rides to the emergency room for a sore throat.
- In Maine, children with disabilities may qualify for MaineCare's Katie Beckett waiver. Eligibility determination is based on the child's disability, not the family's income. Once a child is determined to be eligible, he/she must go through an annual assessment to determine continued eligibility. This assessment consists of a nurse from a contracted agency meeting with the child and parent to ask the same questions year after year. The child must be present to prove he/she exists. There is minimal to no interaction between the nurse and the child during the assessment. The paper work is then given to a physician to review and make the final determination. This is a costly process. Some children who have life long disabilities, such as autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, and serious medical conditions, will most likely always be eligible for Katie Beckett. Here is how I think Maine can save several hundred thousand dollars a year: For children with certain medical and disabling conditions, have them undergo a face to face assessment every three years instead of every year. During the "off" years, have the child's physician complete paperwork for MaineCare. The parents would still have to complete income paperwork in case their situation has changed and the child is eligible for regular MaineCare. Vermont made this change in their Katie Beckett program a few years back. I'm not sure how much money was saved, but I've been told it was substantial. My guess is there other, similar, assessments going on throughout the state that should be looked at as well. I'd be happy to talk further with you about my idea. The process as it exists is very difficult for Maine families of children with life long disabilities.
- Insurance companies require pre-authorization before they will pay claims but not Maine Care. The subject of double billing needs to be looked into. I have seen people go to provider after provider receiving services from all of them at the same time even though

regulations in place forbid it. A simple pre authorization for services could immediately identify who is bilking the system and save the state millions of dollars a year.

- DHHS, Licensing and Regulatory Services is responsible for inspecting Nursing Homes and Hospitals. For Nursing Homes, there are three teams: Augusta, Bangor, and Portland. For the Hospitals, there is ONE team of nurses. In the past, one team member, the Health Facilities Specialist, was "loaned" out to the Hospital team from the Augusta office. That person was responsible for the Augusta region nursing homes and ALL of the hospitals in the state. Recently, the hospital team has acquired a "contract" Health Facilities Specialist, who is paid a higher rate, plus mileage, to survey the hospitals. Each of the three Facilities Specialists (Bangor, Augusta and Portland) should be able to split the hospitals the same way they do the Nursing Homes. You would not have to reimburse for hotels and meals and mileage would be reduced since most of the facilities are within 50 miles of the three district offices. Currently, when the nursing home surveyors are out, Portland has no overnight stays due to travel distance, Augusta has two, and Bangor has approximately five. The hospital team has many more since they travel over the entire state. Eliminating the contract Health Facilities Specialist for Hospitals frees up approximately \$35,000 in salary. The State Health Facilities Specialists are all level 20 employees at approximately \$25,000 each. Overall savings to the state, including salaries and travel reimbursements may be approximately \$40,000/year.

## **Education – K-12**

- The Department of Education would realize a very large cost savings by setting up a purchase department for all school districts. If the State purchased oil, buses, gas, electricity rates, laptops, paper, copiers, etc., for every school in the state, the savings would be huge and thereby decrease each individual school district's current budget for said items.
- DOE has got to centralize and standardize curricular. It would save having a coordinator in every school. Maybe the graduate or doctoral programs at Orono could design the standards for entering the University, and that would become the standard.
- To save money on education spending in Maine, the State should consider providing a notarized letter option for persons who successfully complete a high school or general equivalency education in Maine validating their completion instead of giving them a diploma stating so. I am willing to bet that it could cost the state less money per student to produce a letter of high school or GED completion than it would to have a diploma produced instead.
- The State should only help pay for new schools that meet a certain level of energy efficiency and have solar panels.
- Implementation of a 4-day school week for smaller districts may be a financial advantage to the state. The verdict is still out on larger districts receiving the same kind of benefits. The biggest hurdle (for parents) seems to be childcare services on Friday. Though, most parents found that it was much easier to find a full-day position, rather than an after-school position, for their child(ren) than anticipated. Catching buses earlier in the morning or returning home later in the day, may be an issue, as well. Though, our daylight savings time was changed last year. Click on this link for the pros and cons: <http://www.bcsd101.com/4day.htm>  
AND this link: <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/4DaySchWeek.htm>  
\* As gas prices rise, the transportation savings would certainly be greater.

\* Increased teacher and student contact would certainly be a huge advantage, leaving Friday's as an alternate day for additional contact.

## **Education – Higher Education**

- Merge the MCCA and the UMS saving approximately \$2.5M in administrative costs. They not only would save money but they also could achieve a seamless system where students would not have to deal with two administrative structures when wanting to transfer from one system to the other. As a concerned taxpayer, I think it is time that the State look at the results of both systems in terms of retention rates and not only look at the admission numbers but the students who actually stay beyond one semester.
- It is time to privatize Maine Maritime.
- Close University College in Bangor...there is a Community College 3 miles away!
- Close U. Maine, Augusta
- Reduce the Univ. of Maine authorized Sabbatical Leave salaries for approximately 140 different employees by 50% from approximately \$4.0 million in 2009 to \$2 million in 2009.

## **Transportation**

- Reduce the mowing done by the department of transportation that is done along side I 95 and the Maine Turnpike. Do it half as often and do not go clear to the trees. This should reduce the need for as many people (yes reduce staff a business will have to when times are tough) and do not buy or lease many tractors for mowing (the state has more, newer, and better tractors than most farms in Maine).
- I feel that seasonal mowing on our interstate system, I-95 & I-295 should be reduced. Now, even though our highways look pristine, we mow many yards to the right of each lane and a lot of the median. I can understand wanting to keep foliage from encroaching the travel lanes because of visibility and openness for winter sun to help keep road conditions under control. But mowing the median and up some slopes on either side of the highway seems a bit excessive. There should be a standard distance for which to mow. Thanks for the opportunity of suggestion.
- Get some old state trooper cars place them at different intervals along the turnpike or highways where the troopers cruise, place radar guns pointing at traffic to make roads safer. Place dummies in the cars[driving at 65mph you will not know if it is a human or dummies in the car] hook radar to certain cars that could be forwarded to highway patrol etc. This would save time for troopers, gas being spent cruising highways, maintenance on vehicles, and probably you could reduce number of troopers over the long run.
- Hire out snow plow contracts for state roads to local contractors. Like you do for the mowing of the interstate.
- Subcontract all state road work, with competitive bids. Use time- and quality-incentives that means eliminate the state road crews.
- Eliminate the front license plate on vehicles. Many, if not most, states have already done this. This would reduce the cost by half and still generate the same amount in licensing/registration fees....thus increasing the margin made by the state.
- DOT projects all over the state are using hired flagging companies at a greater cost to the state than if the DOT used their own people.
- Lower the weight limit for trucks on all roads in Maine. Heavy trucks are tearing up our roads and bridges. Reduced weight limits will reduce wear significantly and improve safety dramatically.

- The Department of Transportation spends a great deal of time and money ditching our roadsides. While a certain amount of this work is prudent, it is largely pointless, as drainage problems do not exist in most of the areas that I have observed. Where there are drainage issues, a road grader can solve most of these problems more quickly than an excavator, and associated fleet of dump trucks. Thank you.
- Buying Hybrid cars is a nice PR campaign, BUT isn't cost-effective at this time. Hybrids cost too much vs. fuel savings. Buy small 4 cyl cars (about half cost of Hybrids) AND run them until the engines or transmissions go - not sell them on a time cycle. You don't get enough re-sale value on the time cycle system vs. running them longer until a major breakdown. Cars will now hold up for close to 200,000 miles, so selling them at around 100,000 isn't economical. Look at CMP's new bill stuffer - they are bragging about buying small cars instead of pickups for meter readers - but they bought Focuses not Hybrids. Also, DOT should move trucks around from low usage camps to high ones, and vice versa, to even out mileage on them. Now on the time cycle sale system some of their trucks being sold only have about 100,000 miles while others have 200,000+. The same thing as above goes for running them until a failure happens. If there's worry over being "caught short" when a failure happens the savings will easily pay to keep a few new ones in reserve. Also, over time the people in charge of vehicles will know when to anticipate the "big one" happening to a vehicle and replace them just in time. There should be national data available, too.
- I would like to see Augusta do a cost comparison between the state run ferry system in Penobscot bay and the public ferry system in Casco Bay. Maine State taxpayers are unfairly subsidizing island residents of Maine's most affluent islands in Penn. Bay. A car ferried to Peaks Island costs more than 3 times what a car to North Haven costs and only travels one quarter of the distance. The Maine State Ferry system constantly runs in the red and taxpayers have to make up the losses. Why can't this system be self-supporting?
- Police doing road construction detail on overtime or straight time. Have the contractors supply their own road watch instead at a lower rate
- Fuel conservation for all Department of Transportation vehicles. For one example, sanding/plow trucks travel a certain route everyday during the winter months whether the weather is beautiful or if there is any indication of a storm. It used to be the Maintenance Foreman's job to patrol the roads and decide if sanding/plowing was needed (day and night).
- Consider eliminating the motor vehicle inspection process, reassign the state police employees to other enforcement positions and eliminate the civilian positions. Less than 1/3 of the states utilize an annual safety inspection. Maine is one of the few that still rely on this outdated process. Very few, if any accidents in Maine are directly caused by mechanical failure, and the incidents are very rare when an inspectable item caused the accident. The amount of money and time spent by the state and its citizens on this ineffectual process could be spent better elsewhere. Inoperable lamps, broken windshields, etc, are all readily observable by law enforcement. Motor vehicle safety control can be done more effectively by education and enforcement, rather than inspection. The current system is overly complicated is no longer necessary based on the technology advancements in our modern automotive fleet.

## Energy Savings

- Close state and municipal offices when the temperature is above (summer) or below (winter) certain degrees to save energy costs. Adjust windows and doors for air circulation. Use window shades to keep out heat or cold. Never construct a building with

windows that don't open. Wear clothing appropriate to the temperature, use fans, and adjust thermostats for the least energy usage.

- Considering the cost of operations and energy, it would seem reasonable to research the cost savings for some departments - in moving to four day work weeks, 10 hour days, etc. The savings in heating costs and travel costs would be worth the consideration. The public would have to adjust with a worthwhile tax dollar savings.
- Set all thermostats at 65 degrees in the winter and 78 degrees in the summer.
- Reduce the heat in government offices by 2 degrees.
- Shut off the lights in all state office buildings after hours. I live in Augusta and see the lights on every day/every night in the Burton Cross Building for example. Shutting off these lights and the other state office building's lights would save money and it would help to save a little piece of the environment (less carbon leeching into the air, less light bulb replacement, etc).
- Reduce electricity use, by turning off lights on State buildings at night, and unplugging and turning off equipment at night, or when not in use. Recently, there was a news piece about companies in Japan doing this. This would set an example for the citizens of Maine, would reduce the "carbon footprint", save money and reduce light pollution.
- Please eliminate paying the premium for "Green" electrical power. This is a waste of taxpayer's money and is a windfall to non-utility generators that operate hydro and biomass generating plants. I understand that this may have been a legislative initiative. The non-fossil fuel electrical generators were built or purchased based on market rates, and the owners will do just fine with their investments with out taxpayer handouts. Electricity is a very basic commodity. The department involved is purchasing.
- The State of Maine should begin using nitrogen instead of air in the tires of all state vehicles. If the air in the tires of State vehicles was replaced with nitrogen, a significant amount of money would be saved. Nitrogen inflated tires give better gas mileage and create less wear on tires. It is also safer for the environment and for the public because properly inflated tires allow better control of the vehicle. I have experienced much improved gas mileage and tire wear on my personal vehicles. There is much more information on Nitrogen at <http://www.getnitrogen.org/>.
- Every government building should have solar panels.
- Replace every light switch with a motion activated switch, and every state building should use compact fluorescent or other low energy bulbs, and future buildings should be designed so as to maximize the usage of sunlight.

### **Economic Development Issues**

- OPEGA has indicated Maine Government has forty different economic development programs. Let's force rank these 40 programs using a cost/benefit matrix and eliminate those without clear benefit to job creation. As a target, seek to eliminate the bottom ten programs.
- Assign responsibility to OPEGA to report any duplicative services of state- sanctioned Economic Development entities and respective costs of those, if any, duplicative services within State Government by January 2009.

### **Corrections/Judicial Issues**

- Stop housing non-violent drug offenders and addicts in our county jails. Our jails should only be used for violent people who are a danger to society. Direct our police resources



to crime fighting instead of hassling old hippies and cancer patients for enjoying cannabis.

- As an attorney, I've noticed that the county courthouses have an 8:30am docket call and an 8:31am docket call. This is silly. If I have a client on the 8:31am list, I have to be in court for the earlier docket call so as not to disrupt the court, even though the later list won't be called before 9 or 9:30am. More often than not, the judges take a recess after calling the docket and I end up waiting until 10am or later. It would seem to me that with so much money being spent on court-appointed attorneys, such as myself, waiting around at the taxpayers' expense could be managed more effectively simply by making the 8:31am list a 10am list. The numbers may not add up to millions of dollars immediately, but if I can count a dozen attorneys waiting for 2 hours once a week that adds up to 1,200 per week for just one court house. That's approximately sixty-thousand dollars per year in wasted money. Just my two cents.
- Release non-violent inmates into supervised release programs.
- I was recently made aware of the Michigan State Prison System working with Habitat for Humanity in building houses for the very low, low and moderate income families. I have been looking into ways of supplying panel type construction for our Islands Affordable Housing Crisis. I have been looking into our Midcoast Technical School as a possibility for sheds but got very excited about the prison system as a means of providing panel construction for Affordable Housing. This would be a win/win situation - helping defray the cost of our prison system and providing housing for the very low, low and moderate income residents of Maine.
- Several comments for and against Governor's jail consolidation proposal.
- Look at uncontrolled spending on the executive level, not at the lower levels. Examples would be spending \$20,000 to renovate the Chief Justices chamber, or \$5,000 to renovate chambers for Justice Gorman only to have her nominated to the Supreme Court and too now have to spend another \$5,000 to do it over for the new Judge. How about the \$11,000 being spent on renovating Justice Saufley's old chambers and the estimated \$20,000 spent on a clerks conference in Kennebunkport, only attended by the Head Clerks. They had it there rather than at the Judicial Training Center the court purchased for this purpose. Speaking of that, if the court is not going to use the training center on Stone St. in Augusta lets sell it that site could produce a profit of \$5-600,000 for the state. Now for consolidation do we really need to have 50 different courthouses? If the state closed courts such as the York District Court how much of a savings would that be? I am sure there are many courthouses that are more convenient than effective.
- Use prisoners to do highway functions as they do in other states.
- Let's try parole with the prison system where we pay at least 35,000.00 per year for each inmate. Most states now have parole after serving a number of years in prison and it helps over crowding so we don't have to keep building new prisons which is costly too. If parole doesn't work out then go back to where we are also prisoners should give to the community by serving to help make MAINE clean by picking up rubbish along the highways. They can help repair roads and do many things to help save the gov. money. Other states use them to get jobs done its worth a try and a lot them want to give back if given the chance its good therapy for the inmates and saves the people money by helping out in communities where it is needed.
- Uniforms at Long Creek Youth Development Center. Uniforms cost the State thousands of dollars a year, because they not only provide them, but they must fix & wash them for free, too. Badges are also required, so no one should be confused. All the institution has to do, is issue a dress code. Some of the units (EG Pine) have behavior cards, which costs time, paper & ink. I've asked every staff in Pine & not one, says they use it! It would be junked & replaced with the old system: if a boy does badly, he gets a small slip.

- Ensure that prisoners are getting the good time that is set out in statute. Eligible prisoners at Maine State Prison currently are not earning that good time under 1983 code and 2004 code.
- Change prisoner disciplinary policies so that good time is not lost. It is estimated that approximately 10-12 years of good time is taken through that process on a quarterly basis - largely for ridiculous write ups, for example: for crossing over a yellow line on a walkway; forgetting the prisoner ID and walking out of the housing unit; mixing shampoo and conditioner together in a bottle.
- Take a look at the long timer group in the prison system, meaning the persons that have been incarcerated for 20 years or more, or at persons who are 55/60 and older. These person are far less likely to re-offend (according to national statistics) plus they (on a whole) cost the state a great deal of money in medical costs due to age, years of constant stress plus years of poor eating and often poor or non-existent preventive medical accessibility. Many of the "more mature" prisoners are often able to collect VA benefits plus many could receive Social Security benefits to live on and not be the heavy burden to the state that they are now. Take a look at the individual prisoner's record while incarcerated as far as work record, moral life style and accomplishments toward changing their "stinking thinking" that may have placed them in the prison system to begin with. Many persons that are 60 plus years old still have family and friend contacts on the outside, and can still contribute, in a positive way to society.

## **Labor Issues**

- Workers Compensation - Why is there a right to a publicly paid Advocate? In other states, if an individual truly has a case, a private Attorney would be willing to take the case on a contingent fee basis. This would eliminate Advocate positions, winnow out frivolous cases, eliminate Advocate errors caused by overwhelming case loads and ease the backlog of cases created by general overloading of the system.
- Improve the technology available to employees of the Department of Labor. Upgrade or eliminate OSOS. Investigate the Career Center Labor Exchange. The system is linked to and part of OSOS when it could be a consumer friendly, stand alone internet system. The time and effort spent by DOL employees on OSOS in Labor Exchange is out of proportion to any benefit received.
- Pattern The Maine Unemployment Compensation system after a state like New Hampshire. In Maine, Unemployment regulations are overly complex and not easily understandable to the average person. State employees must interpret rules and monitor each individual receiving weekly Unemployment Benefits. There are rules for individuals in training, work search rules, the necessity of compiling, mailing and reviewing Work Search Logs and a special MEO program for people who want to start their own business and collect Unemployment Benefits. Even a minor deviation from regulations, can result in an interruption or suspension of weekly Unemployment Benefits. The amount of state workers needed to staff and maintain a bureaucracy of this size can be trimmed by simply allowing Claimants to receive the maximum Weekly Benefits to which they are entitled. Eliminate the rules, regulations and most, if not all, of the reporting requirements. The current system assumes that every Claimant is out to defraud the state and that every Claimant wants to stay on Unemployment as long as possible. This is not the case. The majority of people want to return to work.
- Make the Department of Labor account for its penalty and interest money deposited in the Special Administrative Expense Fund. The money is spent without public

accountability, and is "off budget". This money could be used to fund sorely needed office positions instead of being spent on retreats and west coast seminars.

- Eliminate Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB's). These boards function as little more than "middle men" obtaining and transmitting information to and from Maine Career Centers and the Department of Labor. Career Centers can provide the required information directly to the Department of Labor and vice versa. Any oversight or administration mandated by the Workforce Investment Act can be provided solely by the Maine Jobs Council and/or Department of Labor. LWIB's are an unnecessary layer of administration with administrative budgets out of proportion to the work they perform.

## **Miscellaneous**

- Avoid interest charges by paying bills timely. Specifically, veterinary bills submitted by DIF&W K-9 handlers usually incur interest charges. Many vendors will not bill IF&W any more because payment is so slow. As positions are cut to save money, the amount of time to process requests gets longer and longer.
- LIHEAP Program - why must one apply for LIHEAP in order to keep or increase their food stamps? One has to apply for LIHEAP in order to keep food stamps in certain circumstances. She gets \$5 a month when she doesn't even have a utility bills, as they are all included with her rent which is public housing. I am not sure how many thousands of individuals receive this same benefit, but the actual money going to people that do not have electric bills combined with the administrative expense of processing these claims I am sure could save thousands and thousands of dollars.
- Bring real savings to health insurance. Eliminate the mandates and encourage menu plans. Lower cost health insurance will save a considerable amount of both state and local public spending.
- Monitor who get cell phones. Is it necessary for those who do not travel? Monitor who gets Secure ID's - do clericals need a Secure ID?
- Incorporate the "Circuit Breaker" program into the Income Tax program. With a check-mark, income tax payers could indicate that they wish to take advantage of the Circuit Breaker program. There could be a space provided for the Real Estate Taxes (or Rent) paid, and you would already know their Maine Adjusted Gross Income. This could be done with I-file or Tele-file or paper filing. Voila! No expense for printing the multi-page form, mailing it, or having the paper come back. For those who tele-file income tax, they could get a post card, and for those who file income tax on paper could have a line on paper to indicate participation in the Circuit Breaker program.
- End unnecessary overtime for state employees. Instead of using the police dept. at construction areas and spending time sitting at turn around on highways. Make a sign that looks like a patrol car with flashing blue lights on the top and add a radar device that starts the lights flashing if a vehicle is going faster than you would like. The results will be the same. And eliminating that overtime could save a bundle. While on the subject of traffic, you could use those fake deer on the roads posted with the warning signs of that type of animal. Why just store them until hunting season?
- Have all purchasing of items consolidated and executed by one department for government and schools.
- Harbor patrol, marine patrol, coast guard, why do we need 3 agencies that do the same thing in one river?
- Standardization is always more efficient and helps reduce costs. This may be as small as standardizing all the printers so that bulk buying of printer cartridges is less expensive. It may also be representation based on population and not county lines. Just like the school

consolidation was controversial so will be changing representation. But having each person share the same amount of influence and representation is equality and fairly spread to all.

- Liquor licensing renewals, as they are currently done, are time consuming and wasteful. Every year a four page application must be completed, regardless of whether any changes have occurred or not. Every year it requires diagrams of the building and sales figures which are already available. Every year it requires ownership data and every year the licensee must pay for public notices in the paper. This goes to the town and consumes the time of the Town Clerks, and the governing authority, and a hearing is held. Then it's back to the licensee and then back to the state. It could be done much more efficiently. Have a renewal that says if nothing has changed in ownership or the physical layout of the facility then the licensee can mail it back in with their signature attesting to that, along with the appropriate fee for the license with a copy to the town. If a town objects they can notify the State within 30 days. You would save time and money. (Department of Public Safety indicated support for this change.)
- Let the Maine Native Tribes have back all their land that is now state parks and reserve land and let them manage them (undeveloped) for all of us but ensure public access for eternity.
- Create a Maine Civilian Conservation Corps to work on projects throughout the State. People that are receiving welfare and that are willing and able to work should be required to give something back (for fair pay) and this would help provide training for future jobs.
- Consolidate the oversight of state gaming...including eliminating "boards and commissions" that oversee this area, and relying on staff with expertise to make such licensing decisions...as is done in other areas of state government. (This includes the lottery...and move liquor to the state police, who is already enforcing it.)
- Every other insuring entity in the health industry including Medicare uses CPT codes for billing and reimbursement. MaineCare has Z codes which are not compatible with the CPT codes which are almost universal. Why not use the CPT codes with which everyone else is familiar? This would probably allow more integration capabilities in the databases in the healthcare industry, provide continuity across the board for health professionals billing the State under MaineCare, and allow medical billing personnel to carry their skills into State employment without having to reeducate themselves to a whole new system of coding.
- Maine should implement telecommuting positions for as many workers as possible. Not only will this save the state money by eliminating the cost for office space as well as all the utilities and supplies that go with it, but it would also reduce the wear on roads from commuters, and of course reduces green house emissions. Offering telecommuting would also open up jobs to residents living outside the Augusta area.
- I would like to propose that the Maine State Library eliminates their circulating collection. With resources available at the UMA Katz Library, the Lithgow Public Library, and the outstanding Law and Legislative Library, the State Library's circulating collection is a duplication of service.
- In this day and age there is no reason why we have both a Sheriff's Department and a State Trooper branch. There is now repetition of all personnel and services, for no other reason than 'territorial issues' which is just ludicrous.
- Department Of Motor Vehicles - Allowing vehicle registration for a 2 or 3 yr period could pave the way to lower the administrative costs associated with the state annual registration requirements. Thus having the increased revenue in advance to the upcoming years could allow for better budget forecasts. Possible negatives could be: Required proof of motor vehicle insurance could be a hurdle needed to be looked at to overcome. Some type of verification I would think. Possible incentives could be: for the person

registering their vehicle would be a percentage (%) discount on the advance number of years that they would request to register in advance. I believe some states presently do allow for multiple year advance registration.

- Rather than having many meetings in Augusta, use teleconferencing as much as possible. Time and tax money spent in going to and returning from many meetings is wasted. Have special meetings that may last for more than a day scheduled for University of Maine sites rather than expensive places like the Samoset, so that taxpayers' dollars will be doing double duty.
- Every time a new Commissioner or department head is hired the state prints out fancy new letterhead with the new person's name prominently featured. This is nothing more than an ego boost which costs the state huge printing bills, not to mention the wasted money on the old letterhead which is then discarded. This practice should stop. Only the Department should be listed on letterhead and not the new person's names and titles. Such superfluous egotistical actions should stop.
- DAFS should create on-line fill-in forms that can be used by all state agencies for common state activities such as travel, purchasing, HR forms etc. Currently, all departments have to create their own forms; this is extremely redundant and a waste of state employees' time.
- Have all state employees work four ten hour days and this will save everyone money in the long run. We would close offices for a day, save on rental costs of buildings, save energy, save on the environment, and save state employees on childcare. I think this would save on many many many expenses all the way around.
- Practice YARDSCAPING. Reduce and/or eliminate lawn maintenance on state-owned properties by promoting natural groundcovers. Savings in water, fuel, fertilizer, employee hours, equipment, electricity and better for the environment.
- I am regularly amazed by the amount of advertising that is sponsored by various state agencies. Whether it is the DOT telling me to slow down in construction zones, H&HS talking about how tobacco companies are still out to get me, the state police saying we should watch out for motorcycles, or the department of agriculture opining that we should buy local, it seems state government must be one of the larger advertisers, especially on TV. I'm sure the total costs are rather hidden, being spread among numerous agencies, but the number in total must be huge. While each of these campaigns has individual merits, this just doesn't seem to be appropriate spending given our need to reduce the cost of government. I, for one, would prefer not to have my tax dollars spent this way.
- Set a new standard for mailing checks to community providers and others who receive money from the state. Too many checks go out in too many envelopes for less than the cost of the printing plus the stamp plus the envelope plus the clerical costs. We can save money here by setting some sort of standard for printing and mailing checks - none should go out for less than \$25 without approval of the State Treasurer (or something similar).
- The State archiving system is unnecessarily cumbersome and expensive. First, the State saves the actual paper files rather than scanning them electronically or transferring them to microfiche and so there always seems to be a space issue (with its associated cost). Two, because every agency saves its files (and pays for it), there are often multiple copies of documents in archives. For example, in child protective and support enforcement cases, the court saves its file, DHHS saves its file, and the AG's Office saves its file.
- Why are state employment ads in the newspaper so large and so detailed? Why can it not simply be a notice of available positions with an address to web site for more detailed information? DHS is infamous for these ads as is the University of Maine System. Here the state is advocating technology and it a significant sum of money on these ads.

- We need to start using technology for meetings. It is amazing to me that I have been on the EMHS board for over a year and have been able to tie into every board meeting by ITV locally, but when I ask if I can do that for state meetings, most of the time the answer is no. Being from Aroostook County we fight it all the time and continue to request this option to save on a time and travel money. At times we have been told that it is mandatory that we have to come to the meeting. I have traveled to Augusta for a 2 hour meeting which takes me a total of 8 hours to get there and back, how cost effective is that? This idea would not affect any jobs and would save money to be used for programming instead of travel. I bet if you knew how many people traveled from Aroostook each week to attend meetings in Augusta it would floor you.
- When DAFS issues reimbursement (travel) to employees (those who already have direct deposit with their paycheck), the reimbursement check should be direct deposited. In fact, the state should require direct deposit for all employees and stop issuing the paper checks (information is available through TAMS) Savings - Cost of paper check, cost of printing paper check, cost of envelope, cost of postage. I realize this is small - but we need to start somewhere. IF&W - If someone registers online through MOSES for a hunting and/or fishing license- IF&W should use email for correspondence to that licensed person. Instead they use both - email AND snail mail for surveys, reminders, etc. Same as above - saving on paper costs, postage, time stuffing the envelope, etc.
- Put the operation of all or part the State of Maine telephone system (TELCO) out to bid to the private sector. Let TELCO bid for the work. Even if there was no cost difference between what a Verizon or AT&T could provide, we could benefit from their billing system. The State of Maine needs a new billing system for telephone services. There are always greater needs for scarce resources so the billing system gets patched and used another year.